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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 510
By Cohen

A RESOLUTION to express the sense of the Tennessee General Assembly that one of the least understood and riskiest, most lethal and crime-inducing settings for teenage alcohol and drug use, and possibly related youth violence, is the motor vehicle.

WHEREAS, teenagers with their ready access to the motor vehicle have become increasingly mobile, adding a fluid dynamic to the manner in which teenagers use alcohol and illegal drugs; and

WHEREAS, alcohol and drug abuse by teenagers has not significantly declined in the past several years and remains unacceptably high for certain groups, increasing in incidence and shifting to riskier settings; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, according to National Highway Traffic Administration data, 2,238 fifteen-to twenty-year-olds were killed in alcohol-related traffic fatalities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, in periodic surveys in November of 1997 and 1998 and October of 2000, the Aluminum Anonymous Project surveyed 575 miles of Tennessee roadside across the state for

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the discard rate of alcohol beverage containers; the finding of an average of 1,100 beer cans and beer bottles per mile annually was followed up with 35 "Who's Doing the Tossing?" interviews of grassroots professionals working with teens and adults in alcohol and drug settings. The interviewees collectively estimated that 50 percent of the discarded alcohol containers were coming from teenagers; and

WHEREAS, three states - New Mexico, Montana and Rhode Island - have passed similar resolutions in 2001, and in several other states, legislators have either introduced or plan to introduce similar measures in their 2002 sessions; and

WHEREAS, the January 2001 report of the National Center on Substance Abuse and Addiction (CASA) in New York City, "Shoveling Up: Impact of Substance Abuse on State Budgets," states that only one percent of the \$932 million total that Tennessee spends annually on substance abuse problems goes for prevention and treatment, while the remaining 99 percent is used for cleaning up the human wreckage caused by substance abuse and addiction; and

WHEREAS, the failure to engage the issue of teenage in-vehicle use of alcohol and illegal drugs will seriously impede measures to curb the social cost of alcohol and substance abuse in Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That this General Assembly expresses its sense that the relevant state and local agencies responsible for combating alcohol, drug abuse and youth violence should make the effort to curb teenage use of alcohol and illegal drugs while driving a priority goal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be sent to the Commissioners of the Tennessee Departments of Children's Services, Health, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, and Safety.

